Habitat Based Science as a Management Tool for Washington's State-owned Aquatic Lands

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Identifying interactions between habitats, species, and human use of submerged lands is a critical component in conserving habitats and thereby aiding in the recovery of threatened and endangered species. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (Washington DNR) manages over 2.4 million acres of state-owned freshwater, estuarine and marine habitats, and is currently engaged in a state-wide planning effort to conserve state-owned aquatic lands and comply with the Endangered Species Act. In addition to ensuring environmental protection of the land and habitats, planning efforts will include management actions to reduce the impact of authorized uses of the land, while continuing to foster commerce and navigation; encourage public use and access; the production of renewable resources; and generate income. The research associated with Washington DNR's planning efforts includes the development of a conceptual model that describes the interactions between managed activities, aquatic habitats, and species that are threatened, endangered, of concern or rare. This presentation focuses on the conceptual approach to assessing and describing the interactions within the context of determining potential take of listed species on state-owned aquatic lands throughout Washington State.